

Protocols for the Curriculum Review Process in the School District of South Milwaukee

ASSESS – ALIGN – REFINE

Each protocol contains strategies designed to help teams further their understanding and level of comfort with the curriculum¹ review process. The essence of each protocol is rooted in the cycle of assess, align, and refine. Each team must **asses** what currently exists within the curriculum, where there are gaps, overlaps and what is not compliant with current standards. Then, each team must **align** the curriculum to the standards as well as to expectations throughout the district. Finally, each team must **refine** the curriculum to reflect the assessment and alignment with a consistent focus on best practice.

The protocols suggested for the Curriculum Review Process are designed to serve as a guide. They have been developed based on numerous conversations with staff members in South Milwaukee over the past couple of months. Not every protocol will work in the same way for every team. We encourage you to work through a protocol and seek feedback from other team members and people who have spent time on the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework. The most important component of the process is the conversation and awareness of the curriculum that is gained as a result of the activity; not the “finished” product. The curriculum will be continually modified and improved over time. Our work is on-going.

We believe curriculum in South Milwaukee should encompass:

- Best practice and relevant research relating to their content area.
- Current national, state and local standards, including 21st century standards.
- Frequent, periodic, and trend-over-time curriculum and instruction revisions.

The strategic plan for the School District of South Milwaukee guides the district’s continuous efforts to improve. The curriculum review and design process creates opportunities to enrich approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment as we strive to provide a guaranteed and viable universal curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

District Mission:

We, along with our community, commit to deliberate excellence for all learners by engaging and educating the whole person to succeed in our dynamic society.

District Vision:

¹ The term curriculum is used to describe the content, activities, instructional strategies, and assessments associated with a given department’s stated “curriculum.”

The vision of the School District of South Milwaukee is to create a dynamic environment where the world becomes the classroom so the classroom impacts the world.

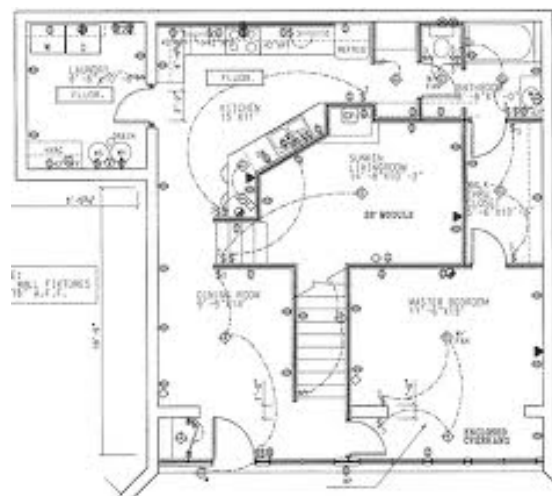
District Academic Goal and Strategies

Goal 1: We will create deliberately excellent teaching and learning environment through academic rigor, attention to 21st century skills, and character development.

- Strategy 1: By December 2013 we will assess, align, implement, strengthen, and refine our universal curriculum as measured by qualitative and quantitative data.
- Strategy 2: By December 2013 we will assess, align, implement, strengthen, and refine our instructional practice and strategies as measured by research-based practices and Common Core State Standards.
- Strategy 3: During the 2010-2014 school years, we will systematically monitor student achievement data using district/state/national assessments so that each student masters or exceeds specific learning targets as defined by our universal curriculum.

How do Standards fit into Curriculum?

The Standards are not the curriculum. Standards guide the development of curriculum to assure there is consistency and measurable benchmarks for departments across the state and nation. A good analogy is that Standards are like the “building codes” where curriculum is like the “blueprint.” An architect (educator) must be aware of the building codes (standards) in order to design the blueprint (curriculum). While there are common expectations for every building, the art of design is left up to the architect to craft a structure that meets the needs and aspirations of the occupant.



Protocol A – Mission First

Step 1: Mission (Assess)

1. Identify the department mission. This should also be tied to the district's mission.
2. A department's mission states generalized expectations for all learners. This should transcend grade level and specific course work.

Step 2: Program Goals (Assess)

1. Identify for each course, what the intended program goals are for the students. Program goals illustrate what the students should be able to do with their knowledge and skills. These goals should emphasize the transfer of knowledge and skills.
2. Program goals can be interpreted as performance standards in that they are what we want to "observe" from our students.
3. *Note: Most textbooks are unable to articulate this information since resources are written with general information with no knowledge of a department's, school's, or district's mission or specific student needs.*

Step 3: Big Ideas (Assess)

1. Synthesize and group programs goals into big ideas that become your course enduring understandings ², course essential questions ³, and unit understandings⁴.

Step 4: Evidence (Align)

1. Articulate what "evidence" will be used to demonstrate previous three steps.
 - a. Assessments
 - b. Rubrics
 - c. Activities

² **Enduring Understandings:** understandings are STATEMENTS that reflect the big ideas that students will take away and keep forever (transcends cultures / times). Enduring understandings are a tool primarily **for the instructor** to focus instruction. They include important generalizations, principles, and theories. To determine the enduring understandings, consider completing this statement: By the end of this course, students will understand **THAT**...

³ **Essential Questions:** Restate the course understandings as questions. The purpose of this step is to provide **a tool for students**. Questions will capture their interest and focus their attention on the big ideas that will be explored in the course. The answers to these questions lead students to the enduring understandings of the course.

⁴ **Unit Understandings:** The unit understandings are STATEMENTS that reflect the big ideas that students will take away and keep forever from the unit. Unit understandings are a tool primarily **for the instructor** to focus instruction. They include important generalizations, principles, and theories. To determine the unit understandings, consider completing this statement: By the end of this unit, students will understand **THAT**...

2. Consult expectations outlined in the Standards and revise accordingly. The team may notice gaps and overlaps.
3. Identify **knowledge** (content) and **skills** (process) that will need to be present.
4. Consider how people learn best.

Step 5: Curriculum Map (Refine)

1. Outline:
 - a. what will be taught
 - b. when
 - c. in what ways
 - d. as demonstrated how
2. Enter information into the BYOC tool for further analysis (assessment, alignment, and refinement)



STEP: 1

Mission

STEP 2:

*Program
Goals*

*Program
Goals*

*Program
Goals*

STEP: 3

Big Idea

Big Idea

Big Idea

Big Idea

Big Idea

STEP: 4

Evidence

Protocol B – Year in Review

Step 1: Let's Review (Assess)

1. List or represent in a linear fashion, current curriculum expectations for a particular course.
2. This can be done in a variety of ways:
 - a. Unit
 - b. Big Idea
 - c. Assessments
 - d. Outcome / performance indicators

Step 2: Program Goals (Assess)

1. Identify for each course, what the intended program goals are for the students based on the yearly units, big ideas, assessments, or outcome indicators. Program goals illustrate what the students should be able to do with their knowledge and skills. These goals should emphasize the transfer of knowledge and skills.
2. Program goals can be interpreted as performance standards in that they are what we want to “observe” from our students.
3. *Note: Most textbooks are unable to articulate this information since resources are written with general information with no knowledge of a department's, school's, or district's mission or specific student needs.*

Step 3: Mission (Assess)

1. Identify the department mission. This should also be tied to the district's mission.
2. A department's mission states generalized expectations for all learners. This should transcend grade level and specific course work.
3. Reevaluate if the program goals, based on the yearly expectations, meet the stated mission for the department.

Step 4: Big Ideas (Assess)

1. Synthesize existing programs goals with department mission to determine big ideas that become the course enduring understandings ⁵, course essential questions ⁶, and unit understandings⁷.

⁵ **Enduring Understandings:** understandings are STATEMENTS that reflect the big ideas that students will take away and keep forever (transcends cultures / times). Enduring understandings are a tool primarily **for the instructor** to focus instruction. They include important generalizations, principles, and theories. To determine the enduring understandings, consider completing this statement: By the end of this course, students will understand **THAT**...

⁶ **Essential Questions:** Restate the course understandings as questions. The purpose of this step is to provide **a tool for students**. Questions will capture their interest and focus their attention on the big ideas that will be explored in the course. The answers to these questions lead students to the enduring understandings of the course.

2. If there is a disconnect between existing big and desired big ideas as evidence by department mission and program goals, there will be a need to add a step to reestablish big ideas.

Step 5: Evidence (Align)

1. Articulate what “evidence” will be used to demonstrate previous four steps.
 - a. Assessments
 - b. Rubrics
 - c. Activities
2. Consult expectations outlined in the Standards and revise accordingly. The team may notice gaps and overlaps.
3. Identify **knowledge** (content) and **skills** (process) that will need to be present.
4. Consider how people learn best.

Step 6: Curriculum Map (Refine)

1. Outline:
 - a. what will be taught
 - b. when
 - c. in what ways
 - d. as demonstrated how
2. Enter information into the BYOC tool for further analysis (assessment, alignment, and refinement)

⁷ **Unit Understandings:** The unit understandings are STATEMENTS that reflect the big ideas that students will take away and keep forever from the unit. Unit understandings are a tool primarily **for the instructor** to focus instruction. They include important generalizations, principles, and theories. To determine the unit understandings, consider completing this statement: By the end of this unit, students will understand **THAT**...

Year in review: linear
representation of curriculum expectations

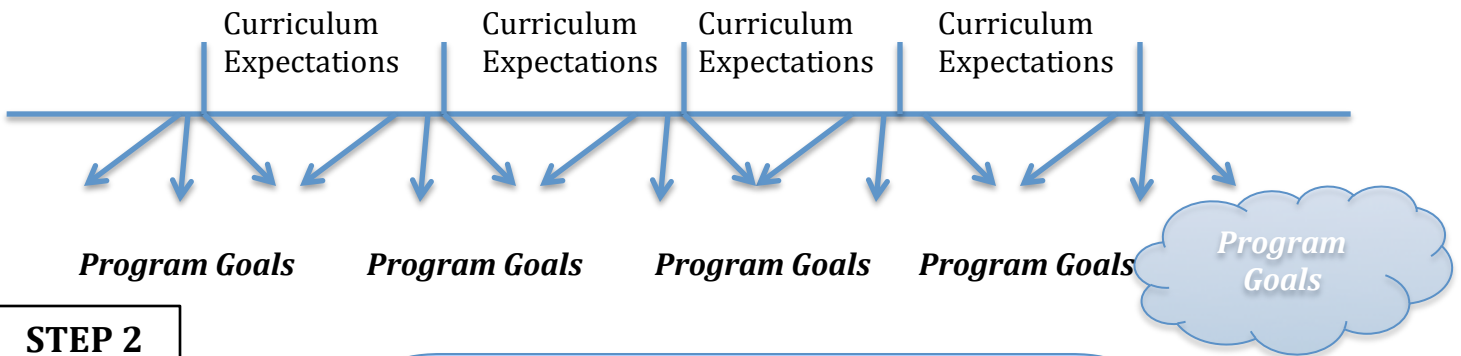
Program Goals: illustrate what
the students should be able to do (transfer) with their knowledge
and skills

Mission: generalized expectations for all learners

Big Ideas: enduring understanding, essential
questions, unit understandings

Evidence: Standards, assessments, rubrics,
activities

STEP 1



STEP 2

STEP 3

Mission

STEP 4

Big Idea

evidence

Big Idea

evidence

Big Idea

evidence

STEP 5